

the Jackson, MS-based Stewpot Legal Clinic—an organization providing legal assistance to the homeless. He has worked with Habitat for Humanity and served as a committee chairman for the Metropolitan Crime Commission. His tireless work has prompted leaders in the Jackson, MS, philanthropic community to laud his efforts and impact.

He has been named one of Mississippi's Top 40 under 40 by the Mississippi Business Journal and honored as Jackson's Finest by the Mississippi M-S (Multiple Sclerosis) Foundation. He is an active member of Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson, MS, and is a loving husband and father of two.

The President's nomination of Dan Jordan comes as no surprise, given his education, experience, reputation, and temperament. I believe that when confirmed, Dan will excel as a fair, honest, measured, and capable judge. I am proud to have the opportunity to voice my full support for Dan's nomination, and I look forward to his confirmation.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I yield back all time on the judge nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President shall be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AMERICANS IN LEBANON

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, earlier this week I spoke about the fact that there would be tremendous hardship on people who are currently in Lebanon—American citizens leaving in the midst of a war zone. The stated policy, earlier this week, was to require people to pay a fee to leave, and I am appreciative of the fact that, after speaking out and after introducing a bill that, in fact, would allow them to waive the fees, in fact, the Secretary of State has done that.

I appreciate the fact that they are proceeding with that and the fact that

people are now beginning to move from the region. I urge that that continue to happen as quickly as possible. We have many innocent people in harm's way. We need to remember that and do everything we possibly can to protect them.

#### MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to speak briefly about the situation with Hamas attacking Israel from the south, the Hezbollah attacking Israel from the north, and the actions of Israel in defending herself in accordance with international law under article 51 of the United Nations charter.

The action against Israel from the south was provoked by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority with the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier and the firing of rockets into southern Israel. The action against Israel from the north was provoked by Hezbollah firing rockets into northern Israel. Regrettably, the conflict has escalated but the parties responsible for the conflict are Hamas to the south and Hezbollah to the north.

The action of Hezbollah comes as a surrogate for Syria and from Iran. An Israeli ship was struck by an Iranian missile in conjunction with other circumstantial evidence of Iran having so-called advisers in Lebanon. There is strong reason to believe that the rocket was fired by Iran—not conclusive, but strong reason to believe. If so, it is an act of war.

The United Nations ought to call Iran and Syria on the carpet to explain their conduct in backing Hezbollah, in providing personnel to do more than train Hezbollah, more than advisers being integral parts of the military offensive of Hezbollah.

The Israelis living in northern Israel have complained about Hezbollah having a knife at their throat. With so many rockets poised on the southern Lebanese border and with a provocation of Hezbollah, it certainly warrants the action which has been taken by Israel on the premises.

It is regrettable that there have been civilian casualties, but I do believe that Israel has made every reasonable and realistic effort to minimize such casualties. There is inevitably collateral damage in war, but this is an occasion when the international community ought to call Iran and Syria to task for their provocative acts for using Hezbollah as a surrogate.

In the context of what has happened, I think President Bush was entirely correct in his statements that Israel had a right to defend itself against Hezbollah in the north and a right to defend against Hamas in the south.

Mr. President, I speak today about the recent unprovoked and coordinated attacks that have been launched on Israel by Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. These provocative attacks are further highlighting the role

both Iran and Syria play in supporting Hezbollah. Israel is now forced to fight a defensive war on two fronts as Hezbollah terrorists and Palestinian militants are committing countless acts of aggression towards Israel.

Israel's response to Hamas's and Hezbollah's continuing bombardment of Israel, the murder of its soldiers, and the capture of three Israeli soldiers is justified. Israel unilaterally evacuated settlements and military bases in Gaza last September after an occupation since the 1967 Middle East war. It has not returned with significant forces since then, despite near-daily rocket fire from the Gaza strip into southern Israel. As recognized by the U.N., Israel completely pulled out of Lebanon in 2000, despite missile fire from Southern Lebanon into Israel. The capture of Israeli soldiers was unprovoked by Israel. Were the United States bombarded by Kassams and Katyusha and were its soldiers kidnapped we would also respond with force—proportionate force—the force necessary to cease the bombardments and kidnappings. Yet again, the Middle East faces a crisis brought on by those opposed to the peace that is sought by so many.

On September 12, 2005, to the jubilation of the Palestinians living in Gaza, Israel unilaterally withdrew its military and civilian presence from every inch of Gaza as part of a bold and courageous effort to reduce the tensions with Palestinians and enable them to better build a strong society on their own territory. The Palestinians in Gaza wasted no time destroying all Jewish houses of worship that were left behind in Gaza, but the world, including the Israelis, remained silent because they did not want anything to derail this sincere effort for peace. Just several months later, the Palestinians elected Hamas, a terrorist organization, to lead its government. During this time, Kassam missiles have been regularly launched from Gaza into Israel and on June 25th, Palestinian gunmen within Hamas captured a 19-year old Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, and killed two others, at an army post within Israel. Corporal Shalit is the first Israeli soldier to be kidnapped by a Palestinian armed group since 1994. Israel immediately demanded release of the soldier. Hamas responded by offering only to provide information about Corporal Shalit, not his release, in exchange for the release of over 400 Palestinians in Israeli jails. Israel rightly refused an exchange, and hoped that international pressure would succeed. Having waited 3 days, on June 28th, Israeli troops pushed into Gaza to find and free Corporal Shalit.

President Bush appealed to Palestinian Fatah leader, Abbas and our Middle-East allies to exert pressure on Hamas to free Corporal Shalit. The U.S. ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, called on the Syrian president, Bashar Assad to arrest Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal, who is harbored in